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SUBJECT: U.S.- U.N. HIGH-LEVEL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE ON IRAQ

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On July 11 the U.S. and the U.N. conducted a High-Level Strategic Dialogue on Iraq, comprised of a political component chaired by UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe and a security component chaired by Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security Sir David Veness. Special Representative to the Secretary-General (SRSG) Staffan de Mistura and S/I David Satterfield participated in both portions of the brief from Iraq. Satterfield served as the primary U.S. briefer for the political discussion and COL Kenneth Dahl of JCS and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Colleen Getz served as the primary U.S. briefers for the security discussion. Both de Mistura and Satterfield underscored the significantly improved security situation in Iraq. SRSG de Mistura related his plan to expand UNAMI's footprint into Najaf, Samara, Ramadi, Mosul, and Kirkuk in the coming months, calling it a "major priority." Acting DASD Getz informed de Mistura that the U.S. would provide UNAMI with one U.S. MILAD in the fall.

De Mistura asserted that MILADs have been critically important in the expansion of UNAMI's footprint, and thanked the U.S. for its pledge. All parties agreed that continuing UNAMI's current security arrangement with the U.S. beyond December 31, 2008 is critical. De Mistura said the current UNAMI mandate was sufficient and would not need to be changed when it expires on August 10 and is extended. Satterfield briefed on his conversation July 11 with FM Zebari in which Zebari anticipated a smooth rollover of the UNSCR authorizing UNAMI.

¶2. (SBU) De Mistura confirmed that he intends to use the recently approved site in the Green Zone for the new UNAMI compound, even though some have suggested that building the UNAMI compound so close to the U.S. Embassy is dangerous. The UN is comfortable with this location and hopes construction will start by January 2009. De Mistura recommended addressing GOI funding for the compound in September when Iraq sends its leaders to the UN General Assembly in New York. End Summary.

Iraq Overview

¶3. (SBU) Satterfield led off with a general overview of the situation in Iraq and noted that the degree of cooperation between the U.S. and the UN has been excellent. Security continues to improve in most areas around the country. Although the sources of threat to security, including al Qaeda, militias, and other armed criminal groups, remain active, recent operations by Iraqi and Coalition forces have diminished the ability of these groups to carry out attacks. Satterfield said, "we were surprised" by the Iraqi-led operation in Basra. However, he underscored that the decision of PM Maliki to challenge the Shiite criminal groups received unprecedented support from the civilian population.

¶4. (SBU) On national reconciliation, Satterfield suggested that the Provincial Powers Law was an important development, not only because it struck a good balance between federal and provincial powers, but also because it demonstrated the ability of Iraqi leaders and politicians to compromise on

issues and breakdown political blocs. The recently passed de-Ba'athification Law, as well as other outreach to those Sunnis and Shi'as who were previously engaged in violence, has contributed to the long-term goal of national reconciliation.

15. (SBU) Satterfield stated that Iraq has made "break-neck progress" with regards to regional engagement. He credited the successful Iraqi-led operations in Basra and Sadr City and the Hezbollah coup in West Beirut as the proximate reasons for increased regional engagement. Egypt, Qatar, Oman, Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain are strengthening their diplomatic relationships with Iraq. Regional dialogue with Saudi Arabia lags considerably behind the others and Satterfield was not "overly optimistic" that this will change anytime soon. In response to a question posed by the UN Department of Political Affairs, Satterfield affirmed that while the channel remained open the U.S. currently has no plans to hold another round of bilateral talks with Iran, noting that the previous three rounds did not yield substantive results.

Update on Elections

16. (SBU) On elections, de Mistura stressed the need to pass an election law by the end of July in order to ensure that elections would be held before the end of 2008. The UN has assisted the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission in the setup of 522 centers for voter registration and 47,000 Iraqis are being trained to assist in the registration process. The UN is also looking into options for using international elections monitors, since such monitors would

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increase the credibility of the elections. De Mistura noted that, with the exception of the issue of Kirkuk, the GoI is almost in agreement on a workable text to the election law, which will likely include provisions for a hybrid-open list and the participation of minorities. Both de Mistura and Satterfield agreed that the Turkoman proposal for Kirkuk was preventing forward movement on the elections law. De Mistura has relayed this message to the Turkomans, informing them that the elections cannot be "held hostage" by Kirkuk. Satterfield further noted that although the Arab bloc has continued to cling to the Turkoman proposal, CoR Speaker Mashadani will press for movement on the elections law. Finally, de Mistura cautioned that August-October would be a crucial time period, since various groups will seek to undermine Iraqi sovereignty in anticipation of the U.S. and Iraqi elections.

Update on Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs)

17. (SBU) On the issue of Article 140, SRSG de Mistura was relieved that the deadline for the resolution (June 30) had passed unnoticed. With regards to the recently published UN report on disputed internal boundaries (DIBs), de Mistura expressed satisfaction that the various political blocs were directing their anger and frustration over the recommendations at the UN, rather than at each other. De Mistura briefed on his recent conversations with the Kurds on the DIB process, noting that he had explained to them that the UN was not able to tailor a report to their specifications. According to de Mistura, the various blocs must reach agreement either on the basis of the UN proposal or an Iraqi-generated proposal, although he noted that the UN report was really an analysis of the various options, rather than a specific proposal.

Human Rights in Iraq

18. (SBU) Deputy Director of OHCHR Craig Mokhiber characterized the human rights situation in Iraq as "grave and serious." He noted the treatment of women and minorities, the targeting of Iraqi working professionals, and the treatment of detainees as major human rights issues in

Iraq. On a positive note, the UN is hopeful that the National Human Rights Commission Law will be passed by the GOI soon. The UN is concerned with the increase in the number of detainees being held without charges. The UN also noted that insurgents, including Sadrist during the recent operations in Sadr City, continue to use innocent civilians as human shields. The UN expressed concern that MNF-I and ISF forces occasionally use disproportionate force against insurgents that causes harm to innocent civilians. SRS de Mistura praised the comprehensiveness of the UN human rights report and commended recent improvements in MNF-I and Iraqi detention centers, but called for more improvements in the near future. He urged MNF-I to allow UNAMI personnel inside detention centers to assess their compliance with human rights standards. S/I Satterfield commended the accuracy of the UN human rights report, and emphasized the considerable improvements in MNF-I detention centers made over the last year. Satterfield noted that improvements must continue to be made to Iraqi detention centers. He also mentioned the long-term goal of transitioning all Coalition Force detention facilities to Iraqi control.

Humanitarian, Reconstruction, and Development in Iraq

19. (SBU) Executive Director of UNHCR's office in New York Pierre Bertrand stated that 20 percent of the Iraqi population is currently displaced either inside or outside Iraq's borders. Bertrand praised the Conference on Displacement that occurred this week in Baghdad, calling it a good example of a platform for reconciliation. UNHCR's 260 million USD appeal to address external displacement will likely be short 100 million USD, and the UN asked the U.S. to help close that financial gap. Bertrand cautioned against a disorderly return of displaced Iraqis from locations outside the country, and lamented PM Maliki's unwillingness to assist Iraqi refugees currently in neighboring countries. Satterfield noted that PM Maliki feels that many of the refugees in places like Syria and Jordan are Baath-party sympathizers who reject a post-Saddam Iraq and don't want to go back to Iraq. Satterfield stated that PM Maliki "won't budge" from this stance. He cited the Balkans as an example of the negative repercussions that can result from an ill-prepared return of refugees. SRS de Mistura suggested that Iraq use its oil money to address the IDP/EDP problem, and pledged to continue to work on this issue with the GOI. On reconstruction and development, both de Mistura and Satterfield agreed that Iraq needs considerable help in properly using its money and resources to address economic and essential service needs. SRS de Mistura mentioned the

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growing footprint of UNHCR, UNDP, the WHO, and UNICEF in Iraq, and mentioned the need for a senior advisor on agriculture from the FAO.

Expanding UN Footprint

110. (SBU) SRS de Mistura stated that expanding UNAMI's footprint into Najaf, Sammara, Ramadi, Mosul, and Kirkuk is a "major priority" that will begin in the coming months. He is also determined to increase UNAMI's self-sufficiency in Iraq. All parties agreed that continuing UNAMI's current security arrangement with the U.S. beyond December 31, 2008 is critical. De Mistura suggested that the ISF should take an expanded role in securing the UN in the long-term, to include having the ISF provide Quick Reaction Forces soon. De Mistura recommended the formation of joint security working groups to conduct an assessment of the ISF and to look at their expanded role in regards to UN security. De Mistura stated that the UNAMI mandate would not need to be changed when it expires on August 10 and is extended. Satterfield briefed on his conversation July 11 with FM Zebari in which Zebari anticipated a smooth rollover of the UNSCR authorizing UNAMI.

111. (SBU) Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Colleen Getz informed de Mistura that the U.S. will provide UNAMI with one U.S. MILAD in the fall. De Mistura asserted that MILADs have been critically important in the expansion of UNAMI's footprint. The UN is concerned about the length of time it will take for its off-base missions to get approved by MNF-I once it moves to Najaf, Samara, Ramadi, Mosul, and Kirkuk. The UN wishes to decrease the mission approval time from 21 days to 72 hours (Note: mission approval time for the UN in Baghdad is normally around 72 hours. End Note). De Mistura and Veness noted that as the UN footprint expands, logistics requirements would also increase considerably. For example, the UN is considering adding helicopters to UNAMI's resources, and they are planning to begin with an initial deployment of helicopters to the north in the coming months.

¶12. (SBU) De Mistura also confirmed that he intends to use the recently approved site in the Green Zone for the new UNAMI compound, even though some have suggested that building the UNAMI compound so close to the U.S. Embassy is dangerous. The UN is comfortable with this location and hopes that construction will start by January 2009. De Mistura recommended addressing the issue of GOI funding for the compound in September when Iraq's leaders attend the opening session of the UN General Assembly in New York. At the meeting's conclusion, Veness proposed a follow-up visit by his team to Washington to continue discussion on security-related issues that were raised during this dialogue, to include advance planning for a UN/U.S. security agreement following the expiration of the MNF-I mandate at the end of 2008.

¶13. (SBU) This message was cleared by S/I David Satterfield. Khalilzad